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Title Page

Full Title: Parenting in a time of COVID-19

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Parenting in a time of COVID-19

COVID-19 is changing family life. UNESCO estimates 1.37 billion children out school or childcare, without access to group activities, team sports or playgrounds. Parents and caregivers are attempting to work remotely or unable to work, whilst caring for children, with no clarity on how long the situation will last. For many, just keeping children busy and safe at home is a daunting prospect. For those living in low-income and crowded households, these challenges are exacerbated.

This has serious implications. Evidence shows that violence and vulnerability increase for children during periods of school closures associated with health emergencies.¹ Rates of reported child abuse rise during school closures. Parents and children are living with increased stress, media hype and fear, all challenging our capacity for tolerance and long-term thinking. For many, the economic impact of the crisis increases parenting stress, abuse and violence against children.

But times of hardship can also allow for creative opportunity: to build stronger relationships with our children and adolescents. The World Health Organization, UNICEF, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, USAID, CDC, Parenting for Lifelong Health and the UKRI GCRF Accelerate Hub are collaborating to provide open-access online parenting resources during COVID-19. These focus on concrete tips to build positive relationships, divert and manage bad behaviour, and to manage parenting stress. These are shared through social media, and accessible to non-smartphones through the *Internet of Good Things*. Importantly, these parenting resources are based on robust evidence from randomised controlled trials in low- and middle-income countries.^{2, 3, 4}

COVID-19 is not the first virus to threaten humanity, and it will not be the last. We need to utilise effective strategies to strengthen families to respond, care and protect a future for the world's children.⁵

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting>

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19-parenting-tips>

www.covid19parenting.com

<https://www.unicef.org/innovation/IoGT>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>

Declaration of Interests

All authors have declared nothing to disclose.

Author contributions

Prof Cluver wrote this letter, with all authors contributing to its conceptualisation and finalisation.

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